

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY! On April 22, more than one billion people around the world will celebrate the 43rd anniversary of Earth Day. From Beijing to Cairo, New Delhi to New York, communities everywhere will voice their concerns for the planet and take action to protect it.



GAZEBOEXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • APRIL 2013

OVERALL CRIME DOWN

Highland credits police, volunteers and community crime watch

Statistics for 2012 show crime is down – dramatically in some cases – in nearly every category compared to previous years.

Robbery was down 50 percent since 2008 while vandalism was 27 percent lower and larceny and vehicular theft were down 22 percent.

Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said police look for trends in year-to-year crime statistics as well as in comparisons over periods of time.

“Our records regarding data collection date back as far as 1967 and it is interesting to see how crime has fluctuated over the last 45 years,” Hojnicky said. “In many cases, criminal activity in 2012 was either substantially lower or remains near the same levels as the last five decades despite dramatic changes in population.”

He credits advances in the way police do their jobs as well as the town’s Volunteers in Policing for strides in keeping residents safe.

“Our take-home police cars and VIPs keep police visibility high while our Citizens Police Academy educates residents on crime” Hojnicky said. “Our crime statistics tell a story of hard work and dedication by Highland’s finest.”

HIGHLAND CRIME STATISTICS

Crime is down in nearly every category compared to criminal activity reported over the last five years - and even the last five decades - despite the ebb and flow of the town’s population.

CRIME	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12
HOMICIDE*	0	0	0	1	1
ROBBERY	20	17	6	15	10
ASSAULT	112	125	96	109	100
BURGLARY	108	101	81	95	99
LARCENY	736	736	683	725	571
ARSON	1	3	1	2	5
VANDALISM	415	494	373	355	304
VEHICLE THEFT	55	55	57	66	43

* Charges have been filed in the 2011 and 2012 homicides.
SOURCE: Highland Police Department

AVOID BEING A VICTIM

- ✓ Keep doors locked, including sheds and garage service doors. Valuables should be kept out of sight and serial numbers recorded.
- ✓ When working outside, keep your overhead garage door closed. Be aware of your surroundings and that of your neighbors.
- ✓ Report any suspicious activity to the police.

CHUCK O'DAY BENEFIT

Chuck O'Day, a lifelong resident of Highland, was diagnosed with Grade 4 Glioblastoma Multiforme Brain Cancer, an aggressive and very invasive cancer. O'Day has undergone surgery, radiation and is now receiving chemotherapy at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center.

Join us for an evening of fellowship on behalf of the O'Day family - his wife, Michelle, and their four boys: Oakley, 17; Jordan, 16; Issac, 10; and Levi, 8. The benefit includes live music, cash bar, auction and raffles.

WHEN: 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 27**
WHERE: Jean Shepherd Community Center, 3031 Mahoney Drive, Hammond
FEES: \$10 advance, \$15 at the door
INFO: Call Rose or Vanessa at Salon Platinum at (219) 864-4247 for tickets.

THE BEST OF HIGHLAND

Congratulations to the 2013 Best of Highland winners. Paul Doherty was recognized for Lifetime Achievement. Business community recipients include:

Top member - Michelle Anderson, First Financial; **Top Volunteer** - Mary Shelton, Centier; **Top business** - Nick and Pat Popa, Popa Heating & Cooling; **Beautification** - Lincoln Community Center; **Top Taste** - Traditions Restaurant & Pub.

Town/schools winners include: **Civil Servant** - Cecile Petro, Redevelopment; **Fire** - Ken Mika; **Parks** - Sylvester Gardner; **Police** - Cpl. Jerry Koedyker; **Public Works** - Mike Pipta; and, **Schools** - Superintendent Michael Boskovich.

NEW TRASH SCHEDULE STARTS IN JUNE

The date to begin a new garbage/recycling program has been pushed back to June.

Public Works Director John Bach said the process has been delayed to allow lawyers for the town and Republic Waste to read through the fine print in the new contract and give the manufacturer more time to produce 16,000 of the wheeled carts.

All 8,012 Highland households will receive two receptacles, each marked clearly for waste and recycling.

A packet of informational material will be

delivered with the new garbage and recycling containers.

“We have been flooded with calls from residents and about 230 attended one of the two meetings we scheduled to address questions and concerns,” Bach said. “We are gratified Highland residents are taking such an interest in this program.”

“We will be updating residents with new information and start times for the new program in the next Gazebo Express.”



REDUCE. REUSE. RECYCLE.

When the new trash collection system goes into effect, recyclables will be collected every other week – or 26 times a year instead of 52.

Public Works Director John Bach said for purposes of recycling, the town is being divided in two with half of the households having their recycling collected one week and the remaining 4,000 having their glass, aluminum, paper and plastic collected the next.

A map detailing each recycling district will be distributed before the launch.

FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE

The town has added another win in its growing list of recognitions for achievement in financial reporting.

Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin received an award for "Excellence in Financial Reporting" for the town's comprehensive annual financial report. It is the highest recognition in the area of government accounting and financial reporting.

GO WITH THE FLOW

Police Chief Pete Hojnicky has received complaints about cars parked against the flow of traffic. VIPs and police are ramping up enforcement because of near collisions with oncoming traffic.

State law requires: "A vehicle stopped or parked upon a roadway where there is an adjacent curb must be stopped or parked with the right-hand wheels parallel and within 12 inches of the right-hand curb." Motorcycles are not exempt and should be parked with the rear wheel at the curb and the front tire facing the flow of traffic.



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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HIGHLAND GIRL SCOUT BRINGS HOPE WITH CANCER RIBBON TREE PROJECT

Sarah Hoffman was at a loss for a theme for her final project for Girl Scouts -- until she saw another community's tribute to victims of cancer.

"I knew I wanted to do something really special for my Gold Award Project," she said. "My family was visiting Notre Dame when I saw this beautiful tree adorned with ribbons of every color. I knew then that I wanted to do something like that here."

"A Common Thread: A Cancer Ribbon Tree Project" is planned to be completed later this spring. Hoffman said she chose a magnolia tree -- which symbolizes hope -- to be planted inside a ribbon that will be constructed of paver bricks.

The plan is to locate the tree along the bike path near the high school football field. The location was selected for its high visibility, reducing the chance of vandals doing damage and a hope that future environmental science students will act as caretakers when Hoffman heads to college.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

A tree will be positioned in the center of a ribbon-shaped walkway. Small colored ribbons symbolizing different forms of cancer will be made available to the public to tie on the tree in honor of their loved ones. Show your support by purchasing \$5 paver bricks, which will form the ribbon-shaped walkway and fund the project.

INFO: Call Sarah at (219) 838-4502.

Hoffman needs to raise about \$2,100 and is halfway to her goal. The park department's arborist as well as Krooswyk Trucking, Materials and Excavating are assisting in the project.

The Highland High School junior said she has been visiting local philanthropic groups and appealing to individuals to help reach her goal and complete the project this spring, which would give the young tree a season to store energy to make it through next winter. 🌱

TOWN SPOTLIGHT: HIGHLAND MAIN STREET BUREAU

GROUP MAKING OUR DOWNTOWN SHINE

Two years after the town received the blessing of Indiana officials to create a Main Street Bureau, the group had a strong 2012 and is looking at even more activity this year.

As an adjunct to the Redevelopment Commission, the Main Street Bureau focuses attention on the downtown and encourages business investment.

President Bridget DeYoung became involved in the effort before it ever came to Highland.

"Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro and I went to a training to help our town become a Main Street community," DeYoung said. "I believe vibrant downtowns are the heart and soul of a town and want to do everything I can to make our downtown as robust and vital as possible."

DeYoung continues to be a member of the Redevelopment Commission as well as the Main Street Bureau. She wouldn't have it any other way.

In addition to the pop-up galleries that showcase available storefronts and the talents of local artists, the bureau is working with theatrical performers who entertain at the farmer's market as well as musicians and artists who attract visitors downtown.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

OFFICERS: President Bridget DeYoung

MEMBERS: Allencia Ballard, Cindy Rivera, Dan Vassar, Darlene Barron, Dan Dunn, George VandeWerken, Shirley Frankiewicz, Tom Frankiewicz, Vicki Rust and Robert Breitweiser

VOLUNTEERS CHAIRING CURRENT MAIN STREET PROJECTS: Joanna Smith, Dawn Diamantopoulos, Rebecca Vander Plaats, Alicia Rosignol, Jodi Pesich, Mario DeGeorge and Lee Kause.

VOLUNTEERS ATTENDING MEETINGS AND PROVIDING IDEAS: Ron Corthell, Carolyn Bioarsky, John Severa, Ted Loehrke, Mark Nollar, Clayton Denton, Dan Botich, Jeffery Guinn, April Guinn, Jill Schlueter-Kim, Mark Mybeck, Michelle Casiano, Rhonda Szymanski, Ula Davitt, Julie Glenn, Libby Lovejoy, Leanne Dywan.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING? Want to help improve the downtown? Call Cecile Petro at (219) 972-7598 or email cpetro@highland.in.gov.

"We have a great group of people who know that nothing improves unless people work at it," DeYoung said. "It's amazing to see what a few people have been able to accomplish. I'm really proud of what has happened so far. Next, we want to see how we can capitalize on sports for the downtown." 🌱



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The organizers of Earth Day 2013 are challenging people around the globe to commit another billion acts of green. The effort is gaining traction through the efforts of individuals, organizations, businesses and governments committed to protecting the planet. This Earth Day show your support by planting a tree, walking or riding your bike instead of taking a car, reducing your consumption of non-recyclable goods and recycling where you can. The Earth needs our help.

PARK PRIDE DAY ...

Join Highland Parks and Recreation for a community clean-up at our local parks from 9 a.m. to noon April 20. Immediately after, meet us at Lincoln Community Center to receive your free T-shirt and enjoy a complimentary barbecue lunch.

INFO: Call Superintendent Alex Brown at (219) 838-0114 for your assignment.

SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY ...

Republic Waste Services will schedule extra crews May 7 to collect trash and rubbish generated by spring cleaning. Residents are encouraged to schedule their household spring cleaning chores and take advantage of the increased collection crews.

NOT INCLUDED: Construction debris, concrete, electronics, televisions, household hazardous waste and leaves. Televisions, computers and electronics may be recycled at the Highland Public Works Facility, 8001 Kennedy Ave.

INFO: Call Public Works at (219) 972-5083.

HAZARDOUS WASTE ...

To make your environment safer, recycle hazardous waste at a county collection site: batteries, household cleaners, oils, paints, solvents, poisons, pesticides, anti-freeze, gasoline, mercury thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent bulbs.

INFO: Visit www.lcswmd.com for collection dates and locations.

RECYCLING DRUGS ...

Turn over unused or expired medications to the proper authorities instead of flushing or throwing them out.

Highland Police Department Coordinator Ken Balon said every time medications are improperly disposed of, there is a risk they will get into the wrong hands or contaminate the drinking water supply.

Highland Police will be participating with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency as a drop-off site for medications from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 27 at the Department, 3333 Ridge Road.

INFO: Call Ken Balon at (219) 838-3184.

HELPING OUR SOLDIERS

Operation SOS is in need of summer items to send to our soldiers. Extreme temperatures in Afghanistan and Iraq present special challenges. "It can reach 145 degrees in Iraq," organization president Colleen Aguirre said. "Soap just melts before they even get it."

ITEMS NEEDED: medicated body powder, baby wipes (70-80 ct.), drink mixes, eye drops, sunblock, socks, shampoo, deodorant and food treats.

WHERE: Drop off items at Lincoln Center or Town Hall before April 15.

SPECIAL NEEDS SEMINAR

AccessAbilities will host a speaker series for families and their loved ones with disabilities.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. **MAY 4**

WHERE: Star Plaza in Merrillville

ADMISSION: Free

TRACK 1: Presentations on autism, special education and mental health.

TRACK 2: Presentations on future planning and special needs trusts, wheelchair accessible transportation, home modifications and more. At noon, music therapy and its benefits will also be demonstrated by individuals with disabilities.

INFO: Call Jason at (219) 755-4049.

TOP 50 ENTREPRENEURS

Congratulations to a trio of Highland residents who earned a spot in this year's Big Sell competition. Sponsored by Purdue Calumet, the contest rewards entrepreneurs for ideas that wow the audience and a panel of judges.

Top contenders from Highland included:

- ✓ **Stephen Lachowicz**, for his Qmd, a training device for billiard players
- ✓ **Jim Jarecki**, for his Braille System, which uses a tabletop machine to drill and insert a Braille bead
- ✓ **Thomas Crnkovich**, for his Animal Retirement/Adoption Home for homeless and abandoned animals.

GIRLS ON THE RUN GEARING UP FOR SPRING RACE

Girls on the Run of Northwest Indiana is hosting its fifth annual May sprint at Wicker Park.

Part of a national initiative aimed at teaching life skills through dynamic, conversation-based lessons and running games, the program prepares girls in grades 3 through 8 to be physically and emotionally prepared to complete a 5k run. The goal is to inspire confidence among girls at an age when studies show their self-assuredness may begin to wane.

Since 2008, the group has expanded to include all four Highland elementary schools as well as teams throughout Northwest Indiana.

Highland residents Jodi Aurand, who coaches the Merkley team, and her sister, Jill Schlueter-Kim, the council director for the local GOTR, have fostered its success, first by bringing it to the area and then by helping it grow from 16 girls in 2008 to more than 400 in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties today.

SPRING 5K REGISTRATION

The course is very spectator friendly. It runs inside the park and on the outside path. A great event for a first 5K!

WHEN: 9 a.m. Saturday, **MAY 11**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park

FEES: \$20 adults, \$15 kids under 16

REGISTRATION: Deadline **APRIL 29**

INFO: Call Race Director Jodi Aurand at (219) 718-5138 or email her at racedirector@gotrofwni.com.

HEALTH & WELLNESS EXPO

Get your fit on and join us for an afternoon of health and wellness screenings, counseling, products and services.

WHEN: 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 20**

WHERE: Lincoln Center banquet hall

VENDOR FEE: \$10.70 for 9' X 9' space. One table and two chairs provided.

INFO: Call Highland Parks & Recreation at (219) 838-0114 or visit www.highlandparks.org for expo floor map and application.

POP WARNER SIGN-UPS

Register your child for Highland Pop Warner football, cheer or dance. Must bring child's birth certificate, report and physical. A doctor will be on site to provide physicals.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, **APRIL 6, APRIL 20, MAY 4** and **MAY 11**.

WHERE: Lincoln Center

AGES: Ages 5 to 13 for football and cheer, 6th to 8th-grade girls for dance.

FEE: \$200 football, \$200 cheer and dance

INFO: Call Mark Alvarado at (708) 516-4948 for football questions and call Emily Morgan at (219) 677-1405 for cheer and dance info.

10-WEEK SUMMER CAMP

Highland Parks and Recreation's summer camp engages kids - ages 5 to 12 - in games, crafts, songs, drama, sports activities and field trips. Register your child today for an out-of-this-world camp experience.

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, **JUNE 3** to **AUGUST 9**. Pre-camp hours are from 7 to 8:30 a.m.

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

WEEKLY CAMP FEES: \$105/\$110

DAILY CAMP FEES: \$25/\$30

WEEKLY PRE-CAMP FEES: \$30/\$35

DAILY PRE-CAMP FEES: \$6/\$7

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

HIGHLAND LITTLE LEAGUE

Highland Little League is still accepting registrations for its T-ball division and has limited openings in the Rookie, Minor A and Minor B divisions. Eligible players must be age 4 by April 30, 2013 and reside in Highland.

OPENING DAY: 9:30 a.m. Saturday, **APRIL 20**

WHERE: Markley Park

INFO: Call Highland Little League President Pat Krull at (219) 924-5121.

GARAGE AND BAKE SALE

Hunt for gently-used gems and enjoy homemade treats at the spring garage and bake sale, hosted by St. James Women's Guild.

WHEN: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, **APRIL 12**

and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 13**

WHERE: St. James the Less, 9640 Kennedy Ave.

INFO: Call (219) 864-7438 or (219) 924-5783.



SWIM CLUB

The Highland Hurricanes Swim Club, a competitive swim team for youth ages 5 through 18 in Highland and surrounding communities, is conducting registration for its 2013 summer season, which begins April 22. A copy of a birth certificate is needed to complete registration. Please bring a swimsuit and towel for an in-water evaluation.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, **APRIL 6** and **13** and during the first week of swim practice from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. **APRIL 22-24**

WHERE: Highland High School Natatorium classroom, 41st and 5th streets. Enter through the parking lot across from the softball field.

FEE: Varies depending on age and level. Payment plans are available.

NOTE: Practices will take place at Griffith High School during HHS Natatorium renovations.

INFO: Call (219) 595-9357 or visit www.highlandhurricanes.net



HIGHLAND HIGH MUSICAL

The Highland Theatre Company presents "Into the Woods," featuring music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Based on a book by James Lapine, the musical intertwines the plots of several Brothers Grimm fairy tales and follows them to explore the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests.

WHEN: 7 p.m. **MAY 3-4** and 2 p.m. **MAY 5**

WHERE: Highland High Monbeck Auditorium

TICKETS: \$10 adults, \$8 students and seniors

INFO: Call the high school at (219) 922-5610.

CRAFT SHOW & VENDOR FAIR

The best in arts and crafts will be showcased at this annual spring show. The two-day event features candles, jewelry, hand bags, home décor, skin care, gourmet dips and more.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 27** and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, **APRIL 28**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

VENDOR FEES: \$53.50 for 10' X 10' space and \$85.60 for wall space for both days

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

ANNUAL WALK IN THE PARK

Lace up your sneakers or skates and join us for fun and prizes as we get rolling to raise money for Fair Haven Center for Women. The event includes music, food, prizes, raffle baskets and fun for the entire family! Mincin's Pizza will provide lunch and Cakes by Karen will provide dessert in celebration of our 10th anniversary!

WHEN: 9:30 a.m. Saturday, **APRIL 27**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park

INFO: Call Fair Haven at (219) 961-4357 or email info@asafeport.org.

VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENTS

Get ready to spike, block and dig your way to the top of the Women's or Power Co-ed tournaments (four men and two women are allowed). Each day there will be an A and B division, which is limited to six teams.

WHEN: Women 9 a.m. Saturday **APRIL 20** and Co-ed teams 9 a.m. Sunday, **APRIL 21**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$105 per team

REGISTRATION: Deadline **APRIL 14**

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

MASTER GARDENING SERIES

Third in a series of free monthly gardening classes, Master Gardener Sue Eleuterio will present a program on bee keeping.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. Thursday, **APRIL 18**

WHERE: Highland Library

REGISTER: Call Kathy Deal at (219) 838-2394 or visit www.lcpln.org/branches/hi.htm and click on Highland Library Events.